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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON OFFICIAL STANDARDS OF WATER ANALYSIS[1]

Your Committee on Official Standards of Water Analysis, which was continued from last year, begs to report that, in view of the action of the Association at the Montreal Convention in forming a Council on Standardization, and in view of the fact that the functions of this Committee should logically be assumed by the newly-created body, the present committee has not attempted to carry out or to formulate any active program during the past year.

It is recommended that the Committee on Official Standards of Water Analysis be discharged, or made a subordinate committee of the Council on Standardization of the Association and that the Council be specifically charged with assuming the duties and functions formerly associated with the Committee, in addition to the duties and functions already assumed by the Council in accordance with the action of the Association at the Montreal Convention.

Without attempting to dictate any policy to the Council on Standardization, the present committee would suggest that investigations be made of and action taken upon the following matters, which among others, have been brought to the attention of the Committee:

1. Securing coöperation of the Bureau of Chemistry, of the United States Department of Agriculture, the United States Public Health Service, and the authorities of the Dominion of Canada, as well as the American Public Health Association, the American Chemical Society, the Association of Official Agricultural Chemists and the Society of American Bacteriologists in the preparation of methods of analysis which are to be known as the Standard Methods of Water Analysis. The reason for this recommendation is based upon the need for Standard Methods which are legally recognized. Experience in the United States has shown that when a matter of legal acceptance is involved, the methods of analysis in use at Washington in the government laboratories take precedence in a court of law.

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[1] Submitted to the Executive Committee, June 8, 1921, and ordered printed in the JOURNAL. Discussion is desired and should be sent to the Editor.

These standards should be supplemented by recommendations, or general suggestions, on the information, other than analytical data, which should be available in order to interpret properly the analytical results and to give a definite opinion on the safety of a water supply.

2. Undertaking a study of the subject of standards for the interpretation of the results of mineral analyses, with the object of making the results more generally available, and of bringing about a more uniform acceptance of a single method of reporting the results, which will more satisfactorily represent the actual condition of the water, and which will take proper cognizance of complex ions, as well as the simple ones.

3. Continuing studies and correlating information on the tests for the organisms of the colon group and related forms. These studies should have reference to such points as:

a. Shortening the time necessary for making B. coli determinations.

b. Attempting to place the enumeration of B. coli in water supplies on a more uniform basis.

c. Determining the actual sanitary importance of certain bacteria which ferment lactose broth, but which are not usually included as B. coli type organisms.

d. Determining the actual sanitary importance of such anaerobes as Clostridium welchii.

e. Determining the actual sanitary significance of certain non-lactrose-fermenting organisms, such as the proteus group or other hydrogen sulphide producing bacteria, whose presence in waters suggests an unclean or unsatisfactory source.

f. Excluding spurious positive tests for organisms of the B. coli group from the reports of water plants by the use of special media, such as brilliant green bile and broth, gentian violet broth, eosin-methylene-blue agar, and other special or differential media, with a view to rendering simpler this important determination.

g. Studying the loading of filters to determine limits within which dependence may be put with safety upon the sufficiency of purification.

4. Considering the use of more satisfactory turbidity standards and apparatus, and the desirability of having silica standards for the turbidity determination prepared by a central authority, such as the United States Bureau of Standards.

5. Investigating the application of routine hydrogen-ion determinations to the control of coagulation in filter plants, where excess alaklinity is always present.

6. Studying the chlorine absorption method of chlorination control, and determining the necessary range of the excess dose of chlorine.

7. Investigating the sanitary importance, if any, of the passage through filters of aluminum compounds, and of the treatment of waters with comparatively large doses of chlorine. It has been suggested that the addition of chlorine to water supplies may be concerned in the apparent rise in nephritis death rates in our cities. This does not seem probable since nephritis rates were rising even before 1908 when hypochlorite was generally introduced, and in view of the fact that rates for the rural districts seem to be rising also.

Respectfully submitted,
M. H. McCrady,
E. M. Chamot,
H. A. Whittaker,
Abel Wolman,
Jack J. Hinman, Jr.
Chairman.